

Abram Bashmet With His Wife Maya Bashmet



My wife Maya and I on the 1st May parade. Like many other people in the Soviet Union we liked this feast of spring very much. This photo was taken in Lvov in 1966.

In 1952 my grandmother Feiga Bashmet died. She was very old and lived the end of her life with her younger son Aizik. My father continued making needles in Lvov and they were in demand. My mother was very ill. She always had a weak heart, but then she fell ill with cancer of the blood and glands. She died in late 1956. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Lvov. My father and 20-year-old sister Emma were left on their own. I realized that I had to support them and got a transfer to a similar design institute in Lvov. At that time we had a two-room apartment in Rostov that we exchanged for an apartment in Lvov in 1957.

In Lvov I climbed the career ladder promptly. In the 1960-1970s I worked as deputy director of the design institute. When our director died, everybody believed that I was to become director. The chief of the railroad department had a discussion with me and seemed to like what he heard, but later I was expressly told that the party district committee didn't approve me due to my nationality. During the Soviet time a candidate for any official post was to be approved by the Communist Party district, town or central committees. So I remained to be deputy director of this institute. Many times I heard the others saying about me that I was a good specialist and a good man despite my

being a Jew. When our institute was closed, I went to work at the railroad production site. I was chief engineer and when I became a pensioner, I stayed to work there as a dispatcher.

When the children were at school, my wife Maya was a housewife. To add to the family budget she made clothes at home. She had her clients. Later, when the children grew older, she went to work at the conservatory where she was chief dispatcher of the curriculum department. She did very well at work and her colleagues respected her. She worked till her last days. She had heart problems. Maya died from a stroke in 1985. I lost my big friend and a very close person. The two parts of her – the Slavic and Judaic ones – were in harmony in her, she never liked pressure on one or the other side. She hated anti-Semitism and didn't like the Orthodox Jewish demonstrations, disregard or disrespect of other nations. She raised our children to share her vision.